

# Fed Up with War, a Former CIA Officer Is Fighting Back — with a Podcast

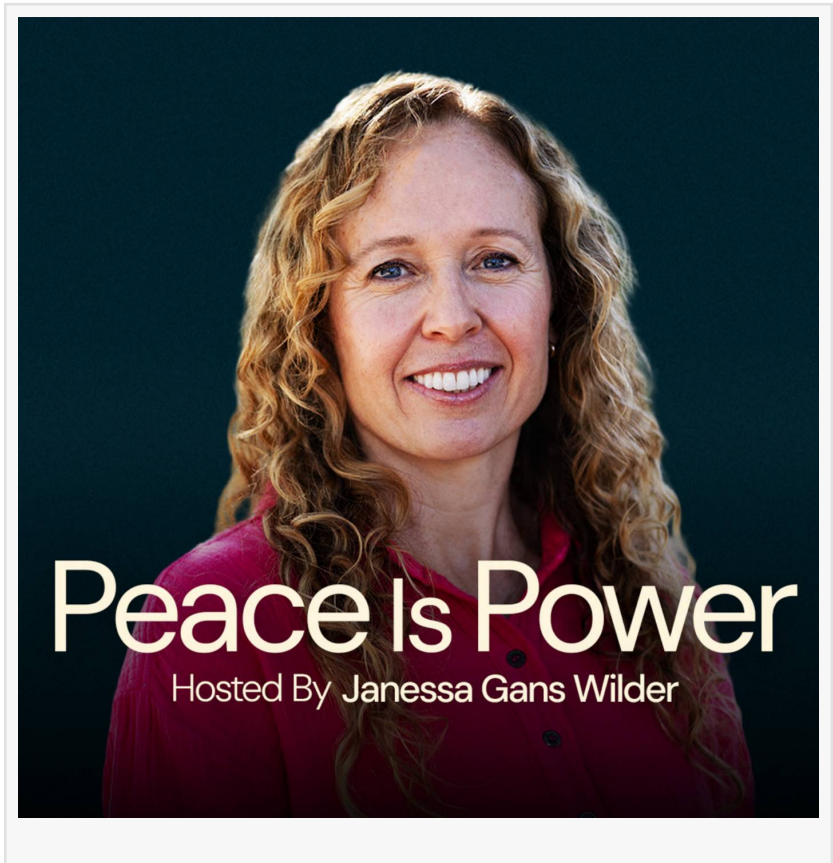
PACIFIC GROVE, CA, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the United States and Iran remain locked in an uneasy standoff, America faces a harder question: what comes next? Active conflicts worldwide have hit their highest levels since World War II. More than 120 million people have been forcibly displaced by conflict. America abolished USAID, hollowed out its diplomatic corps, and retreated from the multilateral institutions that have kept the peace for eighty years, and more Americans are asking the question: is this really making us safer?

[Janessa Gans Wilder](#) doesn't think so. She spent 21 months in Iraq as a CIA officer, including as the only civilian woman on a base of approximately 6,000 Marines during one of the war's deadliest periods. She saw the limits of force up close. And she has spent the two decades since building something different.

Now she's launching Peace Is Power, a podcast that pushes back against the idea that might makes right — and makes the case that peace is not weak, passive or naive. It is one of the most powerful and most underused tools in America's national security toolbox

"Peace is often misunderstood as passivity," Wilder said. "But the greatest peacebuilders in history did not change the world through domination. They changed it through courage, moral imagination, and the ability to see humanity in people they were told to fear. Peace is not weakness. Peace is power."

"Military force can address immediate threats," she added. "But long-term security depends on relationships, trust, diplomacy, and our ability to recognize one another's humanity. Peace can no longer be left only to governments and diplomats. It is a skill all of us need to practice."





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*Janessa Gans Wilder*

The podcast brings together voices that rarely share a platform — from 89-year-old peace pilgrim Satish Kumar, who in 1962 walked 8,000 miles to the nuclear capitals of the world, to Palestinian peacebuilder Ali Abu Awwad, Karim Wasfi, conductor of the Iraqi National Symphony, British peace architect Scilla Elworthy, Iranian-American writer and activist Ari Honarvar, gun violence prevention leader Shannon Watts, and former U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and Director of National Intelligence John D. Negroponte. Together they represent a growing chorus:

the culture of violence is not working, and there is another way.

"Wars come out of fear," Kumar says in the inaugural episode. "Peace comes out of trust."

"Peace looks soft," says Wasfi, who continued conducting in Baghdad through years of war. "In reality, it's one of the most strategically powerful forces."

Negroponte, who served at the center of American foreign policy for five decades, is clear: "Peace is not going to get any closer unless we start talking."

Following her time in Iraq, Wilder founded [Euphrates Institute](#), a peacebuilding organization that has trained and connected peace leaders in more than 60 countries. Peace Is Power extends that work to anyone who is done with the way things are.

Peace Is Power is available now on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music, and YouTube.

To listen or learn more, visit <https://peaceispower.org/podcast>

About Janessa Gans Wilder:

Janessa Gans Wilder is the host of Peace Is Power and the founder of Euphrates Institute. A former CIA officer who served 21 months in Iraq, she has spent her career working at the intersection of conflict and connection. She founded Euphrates Institute to equip, connect, and uplift peacebuilders in more than 60 countries.

About Peace Is Power:

Peace Is Power is a global podcast exploring what it means to build peace in a divided world. Hosted by Janessa Gans Wilder, the show features conversations with diplomats, artists, activists, veterans, spiritual leaders, and grassroots changemakers reimagining power through connection, courage, and practical peacebuilding.

About Euphrates Institute Euphrates Institute is a peacebuilding organization that equips, connects, and uplifts peacebuilders worldwide. For more than two decades, Euphrates has supported people working to build peace within themselves, their relationships, their communities, and the wider world.

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